

U.S. Patent Application Serial No. **10/548,084**
Response filed February 19, 2010
Reply to OA dated November 23, 2009

REMARKS

The applicants thank the Examiner for indicating claims 2-5, 7 and 8 to be allowable. Only claim 6 remains rejected in this application.

The Examiner has objected to the drawings under 37 CFR 1.83(a). In particular, the Examiner has alleged that the drawings fail to illustrate a “working member in automatic opening and closing [that] serves as a tube-shaped body which is fitted in the stem-shaped working member in manual opening and closing,” wherein the working member in manual opening and closing “presses a top surface center of the valve element holder” and wherein the working member in automatic opening and closing is biased to “press a top surface periphery of the valve element holder,” as recited in claim 6.

To clarify the claim language, the applicants hereby amend claim 6 to recite that “the working member in automatic opening and closing serves as a tube-shaped body which is fitted over and separate from the stem-shaped working member in manual opening and closing.”

The applicants respectfully note that the recited features is illustrated, for example, in Fig. 1 of this application. For the embodiment depicted therein, “a working member in automatic opening and closing (9)” is vertically movable as to move “a valve element holder (5)” to its opening or closing position. In addition, “a working member in manual opening and closing (15)” serves as

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“a stem-shaped body (9),” and the working member in automatic opening and closing (15) serves as “a tube-shaped body (15)” which is “fitted over and separate from” the stem-shaped working member in manual opening and closing. Further, “the working member in manual opening and closing (9)” is obviously configured to press “a top surface center of the valve element holder (5).” Accordingly, the applicants respectfully request the Examiner to withdraw this objection.

Claim 6 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Fukano (US 2003/0201015 A1).

In particular, on page 6, lines 16-21, the Examiner states that, while the applicants argue that the recited references fail to show that “the operation of the working member in manual opening and closing can be performed regardless of the force working from the automatically opening and closing means to the working member in automatic opening and closing,” that feature is not recited in claim 6. Claim 6 has been amended to include this feature. Support for this amendment can be found on page 11, line 24, to page 12, line 2, of this specification. Accordingly, the applicants respectfully request that this rejection be withdrawn from claim 6 as amended.

In addition, the Examiner alleges that Fukano’s valve mechanism section 18 depicted in Fig. 5 of Fukano, together with Fukano’s flow regulating shaft 126 and engaging section 132, discloses the recited “working member in manual opening and closing which serves as a stem-shaped body,”

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and that Fukano's shaft 76, piston 72, and holding member 108, together, disclose the recited "working member in automatic opening and closing" which serves as a "tube-shaped body" which is "fitted in the stem-shaped working member" as claimed (Action, page 6, lines 6-15).

Claim 6 now recites that "the working member in automatic opening and closing serves as a tube-shaped body which is fitted over and separate from the stem-shaped working member in manual opening and closing so as to be relatively and vertically movable."

As shown in Fig. 3 of Fukano, Fukano's shaft 76, piston 72, and holding member 108, even if considered in combination, do not form "a tube-shaped body which is fitted over and separate from" Fukano's valve mechanism section 18, flow regulating shaft 126, and engaging section 132, as claimed. This provides an additional reason for withdrawing this rejection from claim 6.

There are no additional outstanding objections or rejections in this application. Accordingly, the applicants respectfully request an early action passing this application to issue as a patent.

If, for any reason, it is felt that this application is not now in condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the applicants' undersigned attorney at the telephone number indicated below to arrange for an interview.

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In the event that this paper is not timely filed, the applicants respectfully petition for an appropriate extension of time. Please charge any fees for such an extension of time and any other fees which may be due with respect to this paper, to Deposit Account No. 01-2340.

Respectfully submitted,

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